

## Essential Fish Habitat project status report

Reporting date: October 23, 2007

Project number: 2006-16

Title: Nearshore essential fish habitat–seasonal fish use, mapping, GIS database

PIs: Johnson, Thedinga, Lindeberg, Harris, Heintz

Funding year: FY 2006

Funding amount: \$110,000

Status: ☐ Complete ☒ Incomplete, on schedule ☐ Incomplete, behind schedule

Planned completion date if incomplete: Spring 2008

Reporting: Have the project results been reported? No. The second year of a two year EFH/NPRB study was completed in Prince William Sound (PWS) in September 2007. Three seasonal sampling trips were completed in 2006 and two more trips were completed in 2007. At least two peer review publications will result from this project in 2008. An NPRB progress report is due January 15, 2008 and talks or poster presentations will be given at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium in January 2008.

The mapping and GIS database projects continue on schedule. A record 7,000 km of shoreline were mapped with *ShoreZone* in southern southeastern Alaska in 2006. Fish were sampled at nine new locations (31 seine sites) in Tenakee Inlet and Sitka Sound in June 2006; these areas were mapped with *Shorezone* in 2005. All data has been entered into an existing GIS database and online Fish Atlas (<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/habitat/fishatlas/>) for reference by resource managers. The Fish Atlas became available online in October 2006. Both the mapping and GIS database (*ShoreZone*/Fish Atlas) will need continuous updating as more shoreline is mapped and fish distribution and relative abundance data is collected.

A baseline study including mapping and fish utilization of eelgrass beds within the City and Borough of Juneau was completed in September 2007. A NOAA Technical Memorandum summarizing these results will be available in early 2008.

Results: What is the most important result of the study? Fish catches were extremely variable between years in PWS. For example, total catch was about 5,000 fish in July 2006 compared to about 29,000 fish in July 2007. Large numbers of age-0 saffron cod and Pacific herring dominated catches in July 2007. In a diel study, no major differences were observed in species composition or catch between day and night sampling in eelgrass or kelp. Seasonal and habitat differences in energy content of select forage species are still being analyzed.